

OAKLAND FIRE CREWS FREE PLUMBER TRAPPED IN 10-FOOT SEWER



Fire crews in Oakland worked for over 13 hours to free a man trapped in a trench that collapsed on him while he was working on a sewer service line.



By Amy Hollyfield

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

OAKLAND, Calif. --

A plumber trapped in a sewer is finally free after he was stuck in the 2x3-foot space for more than 13 hours.

The incident began at 12:30 Tuesday afternoon as the independent contractor tried to replace and attach the sewer service line from a home to a main sewage pipe under the street.

According to a fire official, there was not sufficient cribbing -- plywood around the hole -- so dirt started caving in, burying him up to his chest. After hours of the rescue underway, the level of dirt trapping the man was down to his knees.

The man was transported to a local hospital after being pulled to safety at 2:07 a.m. He is said to be OK.

The tricky part of the rescue operation was the soil. It had the consistency of sand, so it was tough to hold back.

His foot was stuck in a squishy clay, creating a suction force fire crews had to fight against.

Medical crews kept an eye on his vital signs during the long ordeal.

Crews used a vacuum truck from the city's sewer division to help remove the sand from the trench, a woodcutter to shore up the loose sand and old-fashioned human handwork to help dig him out.

The foreman on the job said Wednesday morning that he is so grateful that crews got him out safely.